

**Montgomery County Commission on Aging  
Executive Committee Meeting, April 24, 2016  
Minutes**

**In attendance**

**Committee members:** Noelle Heyman, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Rudy Oswald, Revathi Vikram, Rudy Oswald, Stephanie Edelstein, Doug Newton, David Denton, Charles Kauffman, Grace Whipple

**CoA members:** John Honig

**Liaisons:** Sarah Gotbaum, Elder Women's Aging Alliance; Austin Heyman, Office of Community Partnerships

**Staff:** Odile Brunetto, Director, Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

The meeting began with a conference call with Jay Kenney, who reported on two documents:

1. March 29, 2016 Memorandum to County Executive Leggett from Uma Ahluwalia and Gabriel Albornoz, concerning the role and structure of the Senior Subcabinet now that Montgomery County is enrolled in the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities.
2. April 20, 2016, letter to Judy Levy from Uma and Gabe, reporting that Mr. Leggett will reconfigure the existing Senior Subcabinet to include private sector representatives, and recommending next steps, including: creation of a vision statement; identification of domains and workgroups, and membership in those workgroups; and establishment of priorities, goals, objectives and measurable outcomes. Workgroups will meet during July and August with the aim of developing a 3-year strategic plan by September 2016.

Discussion: How can the CoA support the Age-Friendly Initiative going forward?

- The CoA role is to monitor the counties progress and advise as appropriate. It is not to implement the initiative.
- The Senior Agenda and Summit Recommendations will need to be aligned with the strategic plan. The Senior Agenda was adopted by the County Council so it is not a CoA document that we can just amend. A recommendation was made that we wait until spring 2017, see whether any elements need to be changed.
- How should we "brand" this initiative? Two options are "Age-Friendly Montgomery" or "Montgomery County: A Community for a Lifetime." Proponents of the latter feel that it is more inclusive, inter-generational. We should be careful not to alienate other generations, given that at times there is a perception that seniors seek services at the expense of youth. The City of Gaithersburg uses Community for a Lifetime. On the other hand, we need to keep in mind that Age-Friendly has significance internationally.
- There will be approximately eight workgroups. Their first task will be to develop the 3-year strategic plan, due in September. The workgroups will then be responsible for implementing the strategic plan.

- Each workgroup should include at least two CoA liaisons, who could also be alumni members.
- We should try to match Commission member/alumni expertise with the workgroup area to which they are the liaison.

Following this discussion, the Executive Committee returned to the regular agenda.

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The minutes from the March, 2016, meeting were approved.

#### Chair's Report – Noelle Heyman

Noelle will attend the April 28, 2016 budget meeting. This is not a hearing; it is a work session with HHS staff. Odile said that she will be there, and observed that it is very important for the CoA to be present.

Sarah Gottbaum is a recipient of the 2016 Neal Potter award. The awards ceremony is May 2, 2016 at Imagination Stage.

Isabelle attended the Boards, Committees, and Commissions quarterly meeting. She reported that in response to her question, the County Executive stated that his priorities under the Age-Friendly initiative include health and welfare, housing, transportation, and employment. Odile added that the CE said that inclusiveness of different segments of our County was another priority.

The Summit on Aging Report is almost ready for release.

The CoA has six new appointees, who will be invited to attend the April meeting. The additional members bring the total CoA membership to 28. A suggestion was made that new members be paired with more experienced buddies. Unless new members have a specific interest, it can be a challenge to identify what committee(s) to join and how to get involved.

#### Alumni Group Report – Chuck Kauffman

The alumni group has been meeting, and has identified projects on which they would like to work. These include reaching out to diverse communities, and updating the CASA booklet on county resources as well as offering it in additional languages.

Alumni members would like to participate as individuals, but do not want the group to be considered an arm of the Commission. They want to develop their own mission statement.

## Public Policy Committee Report – Rudy Oswald and Doug Newton

Chuck will testify at the Council Hearing on 4/26/2016, in support of Council Bill 10-16, to defer certain property taxes generated by the anticipated increase in property taxes.

Seth Morgan, Chair of the Commission on People with Disabilities, came to the PPC meeting last week to ask the CoA to support the CPD in asking the County to use resources generated by the surcharge on Transportation Network Companies to expand accessible transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing various subsidies for drivers. The PPC recommends sending a separate letter, rather than signing on to the CPD letter. The letter will also reference concern about other transportation issues that need to be addressed. Rudy made a motion, which was seconded and approved, to send such a letter.

Doug distributed a summary of the status of bills in which the CoA was interested, sent letters, or testified. He also distributed a separate list summarizing the various state bills proposing tax relief for seniors. There was discussion of the challenges getting bills out of committee, and the power of committee chairs in this area.

Rudy raised the concern that there has been very little, if any, public County recognition of successful state legislation affecting seniors and other vulnerable adults. John, Isabelle, Chuck, and Doug will discuss this with County Council Senior Legislative Analyst Linda McMillan at a meeting on Monday April 26.

CoA members met with County Council members throughout the first two weeks of the month. The meetings were informative, and several Council members offered thoughts and suggestions. Doug has compiled a summary based on reports of these meetings submitted by CoA members.

Noelle voiced appreciation for the PPC's organization and advocacy.

### Summer Studies

The Executive Committee engaged in lively discussion about 2016 summer studies. Comments and questions included:

- Should these projects be suspended this year, given the fact that CoA members will be asked to participate in the AF workgroups this summer?
- Should we still do the summer studies, but reduce the number of meetings?
- How can we reduce the burden? Should we do only one summer study, instead of three?
- If we don't have summer studies, how will we develop our priorities for next year, including for the legislative breakfast?

Noelle would like to limit the number of meetings to 2-3, lasting 1-2 hours; limit the report to 8 pages; and limit recommendations to 3. She suggested that we continue to collect summer study recommendations, then identify how to proceed.

### Annual Meeting

Annual meeting will be in September rather than May. Tammy Duell is the lead planner and will present the agenda to the Executive Committee at a future meeting. Topics under consideration are strategic planning; identification of priorities for the county budget and state legislative breakfast; and AF workgroups – what happened during the summer, and where are we going. Odile noted that by September, we should have a draft strategic plan, so should be able to respond to that.

### Stakeholders Meeting

The annual Stakeholders meeting will be in October. Grace discussed the offer from the Muslim Community to host the meeting at the new Muslim Community Center and the H&W Committee's suggestion that the meeting focus on issues for Muslim seniors.

There was discussion about exploring the practicality of the MCC as a site (transportation etc); using the Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza again; and building on these offers by having the Stakeholders meeting focus on diverse communities. If diversity is the theme, planners will coordinate with the Office of Community Partnerships.

Isabelle observed that the CoA needs a process for reviewing and following up on recommendations from summer studies and stakeholder meetings. Odile said that the caregiver support coordinator is doing this with recommendations that involve caregiver issues.

Grace reminded the group of the Gaithersburg Senior Health Fair on May 2, at Bohrer Park.

Austin suggested that if the CoA is to serve the entire county, we must also consider the cities and what they are doing – Rockville, Gaithersburg, Takoma Park.

*Stephanie Edelstein*  
*Secretary*